

*The Faculty of Music, University of Toronto
and
The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
present*

ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET

Geoff Nuttall & Barry Shiffman, violins

*Lesley Robertson, viola, and
Marina Hoover, cello*

*and guest artists
CATHERINE ROBBIN, mezzo-soprano
PATRICIA PARR, piano*

*Walter Hall, Edward Johnson Building
Sunday, October 27, 1991
2:30 PM*

PROGRAMME

Claude Debussy (1862-1918)

String Quartet, G minor, Opus 10

I: Animé et très décidé

II: Assez vif et bien rythmé

III: Andantino - doucement expressif

IV: Très modéré - très animé

Rodolphe Mathieu (1890-1962)

Deux Poemes pour Chant
for mezzo and string quartet

I: "Après ton appeal"

II: "Quand tu pleures"

INTERMISSION

Ernest Chausson (1855-1899)

Chanson Perpétuelle, Opus 37,
for mezzo, piano and string quartet

"Bois frissonnants, ciel étoilé"

Cesar Franck (1822-1890)

Piano Quintet, F minor

I: Molto moderato quasi lento - Allegro

II: Lento, con molto sentimento

III: Allegro non troppo, ma con fuoco



Tonight's concert will be broadcast on the CBC STEREO (94.1 FM) programme ARTS NATIONAL on tuesday, November 19, 1991 at 8:00 PM. The host of ARTS NATIONAL is Terry Campbell.

Producer: Neil Crory
Technician: David Burnham

The St. Lawrence String Quartet's second concert in this series will take place on Sunday, March 29, 1992 at 14:30 at Walter Hall in the Edward Johnson Building. The programme will include two quartets of Beethoven (Opus 95 and Opus 131) as well as a new quartet—a CBC commission for the SLSQ—by the Toronto composer, Chris Paul Harman. The SLSQ would like to thank the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto and the CBC for sponsoring their Toronto season.

PROGRAMME NOTES

1. Claude Debussy: String Quartet, G minor, Opus 10

The four-movement G minor quartet—which was completed and premiered (by the Ysaye Quartet) in 1893—was one of Debussy's first works to be performed in public. Although the composer was only 31 at the time, the musical style and language were already clearly his own. Since its premiere (which created what an observer described as a "mild sensation"), the work has become one of the staples of the quartet literature.

2. Rodolphe Mathieu: Deux Poemes pour Chant, for mezzo and string quartet

In 1920, following his early musical studies in Montreal, the Quebec-born composer and teacher Rodolphe Mathieu went to Paris where he studied composition with Vincent D'Indy. It was in 1928, the year following his return to Montreal, that Mathieu composed his Deux Poemes pour Chant. Mathieu's work "reflects two currents which dominated the late 19th and early 20th centuries: first, the revolution in aesthetics and musical language achieved by Debussy and, second, the wave of romanticism that came through Wagner and, later, the post-Wagnerianism of Schoenberg and Berg.

In his earliest compositions, Mathieu deliberately aligned himself with the music of Debussy... Yet Debussy's influence remains partial and is limited to certain technical features. Mathieu is first and foremost a romantic, and his roots are Wagnerian;..." (Encyclopedia of Music in Canada)

1. After your call

Yesterday, yesterday I was elated,
Yesterday, yesterday I was elated by your call.
For I don't know how many hours
I savoured your pure and timid voice,
Still gliding from your distant mouth across my cheek
Your pure and timid voice reaching out through the night to me
I savoured your loving breath,
I savoured your desire, our love, our pain.

Yesterday, I was elated,
I was elated by your call;
My head thrown back, my heart raced,
My heart raced like that of a sick child.
I could see your eyes, I could see your lips,
You were nothing but a mysterious caress,
Enveloping me in sensual pleasure,
You were but a kiss, you were but a kiss,
But a scent, but a sigh.

Sleep would come toward me slowly,
But seeing me so full of you it would turn and flee,
Afraid of causing me harm.

Yesterday, I was elated.

2. When you cry

When you cry, gentle lover,
Your beautiful eyes are like perfumed springs,
Flowing out from under your half-closed lids.

When you cry with sorrow, and I drink your tears,
It seems to me that flowers are hurting themselves
To slake my thirst.
Bending over you, I can see in your eyes
Dark clouds billowing, billowing,
Towards your troubled soul.

When you cry with joy,
Your smile is like a lovely rainbow,
Emerging across the blue expanse of your comforted heart.
All the hues of your very being shimmer
In every drop of your last, sun-drenched tears.

3. Ernest Chausson: Chanson Perpétuelle, for mezzo, piano and string quartet

Chausson was born in Paris and was originally destined for a career in law. When he was 25, however, he enrolled at the Paris Conservatoire where he studied composition with Jules Massenet. He was also a student of Cesar Franck and a friend of Claude Debussy--both of whom exerted an influence upon his musical development. Chanson Perpétuelle was Chausson's final vocal work before his untimely death (at 44) in a bicycle accident. The text, by Charles Cros, is a declaration of love to an absent lover.

Unceasing Song

Quivering woods, starry sky,
My beloved has gone away,
Taking with him my desolate heart.
Winds, let your plaintive sighs,
Enchanting nightingales, let your songs
Tell him I am dying.
The first evening he came here,
My soul was at his mercy;
I cared no more for pride.
My looks were full of avowals;
He took me in his muscular arms
And kissed me on the brow.
I was all a-tremble,
And then--I no longer know how--

He became my lover.
I said to him, "You will love me as long as you can do so"
I slept well only in his arms.
But he, feeling his heart grown cold,
Went off the other morning
Without me to a distant land.
Since I have my dearest no more,
I shall die in the pond
Among the flowers, beneath the sleeping waters;

Once at the edge, I shall speak
His name to the wind, musing
That there I often waited for him;
And as in a gilded shroud,
My hair loose, I shall abandon myself
To the wind's will.
Past moments of happiness will shed
Their gentle glimmer on my brow,
And the green rushes will entwine me;
And my breast, trembling in that
Caressing clasp, will believe
Itself embraced by my absent love!

4. Cesar Franck: Piano Quintet, F minor

Throughout his lengthy career as a teacher, Cesar Franck influenced an entire generation of composers including Chausson, d'Indy, Duparc, Widor and Vierne. As a composer, however, he was clearly a late bloomer. His best known works (including the F minor quintet), in fact, date from the last twelve years of his life. Franck's quintet is unquestionably one of the masterpieces of the chamber music repertoire and compares favourably with the piano quintets of Schumann, Brahms and Dvorak. The premiere of the Quintet took place at a concert of the Société Nationale de Musique in 1880. One critic, at a later performance, reported that the quintet "completely enthralled the audience, restraining them in silence at the end of each movement, not only from applause, but from any kind of oral acclamation, while at times it had drawn tears from the eyes of many of them."

BIOGRAPHIES

CATHERINE ROBBIN is one of the world's renowned mezzo-sopranos. She has performed with many of today's leading conductors throughout her native Canada and in cities such as New York, Paris, London, Lisbon, Stuttgart, Washington and Chicago. Miss Robbin is equally at ease in a wide range of vocal music, but is particularly noted for her masterful interpretations of Baroque and Romantic literature.

Miss Robbin has recorded extensively for companies such as Deutsche Gramophon, Erato and the CBC. Her recording of Gustav Mahler's Kindertotenlieder, Ruckertlieder and Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen with the Kitchener-Waterloo Symphony Orchestra conducted by Raffi Armenian was recently released on the CBC SM5000 label. In addition, the world-premiere recording of Handel's Floridante (featuring Miss Robbin in the title role) will soon to be released--also on the CBC SM5000 label.

Toronto-born PATRICIA PARR has had a brilliant career since her first recital at age six. Since then, she has been heard in concert, on radio, television and with major symphony orchestras including the Toronto Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra and the Pittsburgh Symphony. Her outstanding abilities as a chamber music artist have become more widely known with numerous appearances at Rudolf Serkin's Marlboro Music Festival in Vermont and with the Guarneri and Orford String Quartets.

In addition to an active teaching career at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music, Miss Parr is a founding member of the acclaimed chamber ensemble AMICI (with U. of T. faculty members: Joaquin Valdepenas, clarinet, and David Hetherington, cello). Miss Parr has also recorded for the CBC SM5000 label--a programme of music for clarinet and piano with Mr. Valdepenas.

The ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET was formed in the fall of 1989 in Toronto, where they studied with cellist Dennis Brott and violinist Lorand Fenyves. They are currently based in New York City, completing the second of a unique two-year residency with the renowned Emerson String Quartet, sponsored by the Hartt School of Music, University of Hartford.

This past summer, the St. Lawrence String Quartet was awarded second prize at both the Glory of Mozart Chamber Music Competition in Canada and the Melbourne International Chamber Music Competition in Australia.

In addition to their participation at these two competitions, the summer included studies at the Banff School of Fine Arts in Alberta and the Center for Advanced String Quartet Studies at the Aspen School of Music in Colorado.

Highlights of upcoming events include performances throughout Canada, debut recitals in New York and Washington, and appearances with such distinguished artists as pianists Robert Silverman and Ruth Laredo and both the Emerson and Tokyo String Quartets.

The St. Lawrence String Quartet is generously supported by the Government of Ontario through the Ontario Arts Council and the Alberta Foundation for the Performing Arts.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT THE FACULTY OF MUSIC

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Monday, November 4, at 8:00 pm

FACULTY RECITAL

Jo-Anne Bentley, mezzo-soprano; Che Anne Loewen, piano

Walter Hall-\$10-5 Students/Seniors

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